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ABSTRACT

This report explicates the concrete group development of a cadre of persons from Simeon High School, the University of Chicago, and the Board of Education in the summer sector of the Ford Training and Placement Program. The report is organized around crucial indices of group development, i.e., the problem of leadership. Data were collected from daily non-participant observation. Issues are explicated only in connection with a particular process; otherwise, they are alluded to. The procedure aids in the interpretation of the group process. Implications for the program are suggested; however, it was evident that a great deal of confusion concerning roles, objectives, and goals existed. Suggestions for the eradication of these difficulties are presented. A three-item bibliography and an appendix listing problem areas and possible methods of approaching the problems are included. (Related documents are SP 005 967 and 005 964.) (Author/MJM)

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# THE SIMEON CADRE IN FORMATION

SUMMER 1970

Submitted by Calvin Sharpo

SP 005 968

J. W. Getzels (1967) in his proposal for improvement of education in Inner City schools suggests the formation and placement of cadres, consisting of role sets of teachers, counselors, social psychological specialists, and administrators, for the purposes of mutual support and systematic changes in a particular educational social system. The rationale behind such a formation is the assumption that in a social system the size of any given school, significant change probably will not take place on the basis of individual effort. Rather, it must be based on a unit of operation, which provides comprehensive programming and activity leading toward greater educational effectiveness. Because of the particularity of the inner-city school as a social system, this unit of operation must represent and consist of the interrelationship of roles within that system.

The purpose of this paper is to explicate the concrete group development of a cadre of persons from Simeon High School, the University of Chicago, and the Board of Education in t summer sector of the Ford Training and Placement Program. The report is organized around what the author considers one of the most crucial indices of group development in this particular instance; i.e., the problem of "leadership."

The observer collected all data from daily observation of the group process in the cadre. His role in the cadre was non-participatory except when providing feedback on process difficulties. Notes were taken for two reasons: (1) to determine the issues that arose out of the group's interaction, (2) to discover the character of the process that emerged in dealing with these issues. Throughout this paper the reader will find that issues are only explicated in connection with a particular process; otherwise they are alluded to. The reason for this procedure is that the primary intent of the observer was to interpret the group process. Because of the secondary significance

of issues, however, an appendix of major issues and resolutions has been included in this study.

The cadre consisted of 18 persons in the following categories:

a. two administrators

b. one cadre liaison

c. one consultant

d. one researcher

e. seven experienced Simeon teachers

f. six MAT or MST interns

The seven experienced teachers represented the following six areas: Industrial Arts, Science, English, Music, Vocational Counseling, and Business Education. The six MAT-MST interns represented the following five areas: English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Art, Adult Education. There were two interns in the area of Social Studies. Among the experienced men there were five male (two White, three Black) and two females (both Black). Among the MAT interns there were four males (three Black, one White) and two females (one Black, one White). Both administrators were males (one Black, one White.) The three staff persons were males (all Black).* Experienced teachers ranged from nine to one years of teaching experience at Simeon and from 10 to three years total teaching experience. Interns ranged from 18 to 0 years total teaching experience. Three interns had more teaching experience than one experienced teacher from Simeon; two interns had more teaching experience than two teachers from Simeon; and one intern had more teaching experience than any member of the cadre except the two administrators. The principal had been at Simeon for a period of one year while the assistant principal has been there for 1-1/2 years. The cadre liaison person had a background in Social Work and

administration in a community college, while the researcher had a two year teaching background. The process consultant had extensive experience in the area of group process development and human relations. These data reflect a homogeneous grouping of persons in terms of background in education and other related areas, a fact which served to attenuate the distinctions that would ordinarily arise along an experience-inexperience line.

In order to consider in detail what occurred when these individuals were collectivized, the author will utilize George C. Heman's Conceptual Model of group development.[2] This model was developed after considerable observation; it will, therefore, inform our efforts to understand objectively what behavioral motions pervaded the Simeon cadre. The model may be understood as follows: group behavior is determined by a dialectical relationship between external (environmental) factors and internal variables.* External factors include the conditions under which a number of persons are brought together; internal variables include the sentiments, interaction, activity, norms and roles that develop out of this proximity. Heman concludes that there is a mutual dependence of internal variables which leads to certain observable group behavior. Axiomatically, the degree to which any one of these factors varies is directly related to the same degree of variance in one or more other factors. It should also be apparent that change in the external system may be a function of change in the internal system and vice-versa.

Environmental factors in the case of the Simeon cadre included the University of Chicago, the Board of Education and the Simeon Vocational High School. The task as defined by the Ford Training and Placement Program was to work together as a group of teachers, interns, role specialists, University and Board of Education personnel, and an administrator to improve through mutual

*Dialectical should be understood here as the mutually critical effect of one set of conditions upon another; i.e., external upon external.

support the quality of education at Simeon Vocational High School. No further objectives were delineated. A close scrutinizing of these variables will point up potential problems for internal group development. Certain ascribed status differences already existed; e.g., between principal and teacher, between experienced teacher and intern. In addition to this difficulty, the environment had predetermined the roles and ranks of these persons existing as a body to effect change in the school. In a model that does not delineate the leadership role of the group, the school principal will probably emerge as the leader. The group character will reflect style of leadership.

As variables in the internal development of the Simeon cadre are discussed, the relative effects of these external factors will become apparent.

A two-day retreat was held during the first week of the summer training program for the purpose of familiarizing members of the program with each other and forming incipent relationships among cadre members. It provided the first opportunity for sustained interaction among cadre members and lead to the appearance of the following group behavior variables:

a. the occurence of interaction

b. the appearance of positive expressive sentiments toward one another

c. participation in various group activities.

Because of the relatively large number of activities on the retreat, members of the cadre interacted and developed positive feeling for one another. Absent from the retreat were two teachers and the two principals. The principal attended one evening session. One of the teachers quickly joined in the group process, while two weeks passed before the other was included. The administrators never became a part of this primary formation. Incipient norms

included humor and willingness to undertake tasks. Terms denoting the formation of a primary group -- "we," "let's" -- were used early in the life of the cadre. This process was interrupted only by the Black-White Encounter of the second evening. The purpose of this encounter was ostensibly to promote sensitivity between Blacks and Whites through genuine expression of each group's perception of the other. Observable effects; e.g., noticeable hostilities, and misunderstanding, decried the value of this exercise. Recovery from this exercise, however, was rapid for Simeon cadre-members. Leadership during this period rested primarily in the hands of the consultant as he initiated most of the formal activity and interaction. To a lesser extent the cadre liaison also assumed a leadership role. The administrator's absence during this formative stage of the group's development was crucial.

According to Olmsted's definition, the Simeon cadre had already become a group.[3] Even though several crucial components were missing, they were a plurality of individuals who were in contact with one another, who took one another into account, and who were aware of some significant commonalty.

During the second week the cadre began working on concrete tasks for the coming school year, defining objectives, etc. (see appendix). During the first two sessions neither the principal nor the consultant were present. Leadership went formally to the cadre liaison, even though several group members initiated and facilitated interaction. On the third day the principal was present and immediately assumed leadership of the group. His leadership was not challenged because of his external role. The consultant who may have neutralized the strength of the principal's position was absent. On the next day the principal was absent and the consultant was present.

Both men were absent the following day. The problem of absenteeism became the first major fetter on the group process. Fortunately, the liaison was consistently in attendance. The group then proceeded without the crucial roles of principal and consultant, to identify problems, define objectives, and delineate activities which could possibly realize stated objectives. This period was characterized by far-reaching discussion of ways to improve the school. Such discussions were short-lived, however, as concern about the limitations of the cadre mounted. Norms changed slightly because of the ambiguity surrounding the role of the cadre; tasks were not clearly defined; the limits of the cadre had not been set. There was increasing apprehension concerning the principal and to a lesser degree the consultant in the cadre. The principal assured the cadre of his compliance with any decision reached, as he singled out those experienced teachers who could speak in his stead. This had the effect of splitting the cadre between experienced teachers from Simeon and interns. Also the pattern of interaction, which featured the principal and one or more of his experienced school-based subordinates, predominated when the principal was present.

The style of leadership exercised by the principal thwarted a great deal of spontaneous discussion. Olmsted (1959) in describing the results of a study done by Lippitt and White in 1952, suggests three styles of leadership and discusses their effects on group behavior. Democratic leadership encourages personal and friendly relations among group members. Laizzez-faire leadership is characterized by a lack of achievement. Authoritarian leadership evokes aggressive and apathetic reactions and occasions the existence of hostility in the group. Leadership was generally democratic in the Simeon cadre in the

absence of the principal. During his presence, however, leadership assumed authoritarian characteristics. The following comments reflect general tendencies in the group members' perception of themselves in relation to the principal: "You might as well realize that he is the principal," "there is no use talking about this if he is not here, because if he doesn't go along with it, it will not be done." Because of his sudden switch in leadership styles and the implications of the principal's external position, interaction and activity were stifled within the group process while sentiments concerning group possibilities underwent a decisive change. During ensuing discussions the tendency to assess all suggestions in light of what the missing administrator "would say," emerged as normative behavior. Sentiments arising out of frustration reflected a disenchantment with the functionality of the cadre concept. With the onset of this confusion of norms the cadre experienced a protracted period of disintegration and re-evaluation. Norms were questioned along with existing roles and the Ford Training and Placement Program objectives. Most salient during this period was the questioning of the roles of principal, research and evaluation, and cadre liaison.

During the third week the principal came in on Monday and immediately assumed leadership on the issue of "community representation" in the cadre -- an issue which had been discussed and resolved by the cadre. He expressed his feeling that the issue of community representation was not one for the cadre to resolve. This statement did not jibe with his earlier statement which apparently gave the cadre his condonement of any of its deliberations. At this point it became obvious that the principal's consistent participation

*It is significant that the consultant was never present on the same day that the principal was present; thus, there was no feedback from the process consultant during this pivotal perior.

was indispensable for cadre development. There was much interaction between interns, experienced teachers, and the principal on this issue. The "group" was generally supportive of its members. The external fact of authority, however, was too strong to afford decisive opposition internally. The group process consultant may have facilitated movement of the group at this point. His absence was crucial. After this pivotal meeting at the beginning of the third week, the assistant principal was present at several of the following meetings. Norms, patterns of interaction and activity did not change significantly with the assistant principal's presence. (It is apparent that even though the group in the principal's absence operated without a formal leader, the principal assumed complete leadership when present.) Disintegration during this period took the form of joking, sub-grouping, and a lack of orientation to the task. The decision-making process, which had heretofore been consensus oriented was questioned and temporarily replaced by the parliamentary system. The group designated the cadre liasion as chairman. The primary group took form in the face of frustrating external factors.* Some interns accused some experienced teachers of capricious behavior in the presence of the principal. The group was charged by one member with being too rhetoric-oriented. The principal was constantly referred to as "He" indicating his position as an outsider. Discussion of his role as a cadre member was tabled until the Ford Training and Placement Program director and the principal could be present on the same day to discuss the role of the cadre and community representative. The group was generally supportive during this period of mounting frustration. The interns played crucial roles as initiators and facilitators and even decision-makers. Because the principal was not a consistent participant in the group process and because his style of leadership imposed a different mode of

operation on the group, the following variations in the group's behavior were observed during his presence:

a. Mode of operation shifted from an initiator-discussion-decision pattern to a dialogue pattern usually involving the principal.

b. There was little task orientation.

c. Norms changed from creative contributing behavior to silent resignation by many group members.

d. Interaction decreased.

e. Sentiments changed to reflect frustration.

f. Activities decreased.

g. Cadre divided between experienced teachers and interns.

h. Cadre roles became confused.

i. Personal interests took priority over group interest.

j. Isolation of new teachers was felt greatly.

Summarily, disintegration characterized the group process. These changes were a function of the externally defined role of principal, the style of leadership that he brought to the group, and the poverty of interaction between the group and the leader resulting from his frequent absences from the planning sessions. At the end of the third week the principal had attended three of ten cadre planning sessions.

The group process continued in and through disintegration as alternative modes of operation were discovered. This included the emergence of new norms. The assistant principal attended meetings toward the end of the week at which time centripetal forces had begun to operate. The assistant program director substituted for the cadre liaison and, because of his "aesthetic distance," was able to offer positive feedback and reinforcement on the process of inter-

*See Olmsted's definitions of primary group.

action. This gave the group its needed boost. One member, who recalled the recent frustration and lack of interaction the group had just experienced commended, "He thinks we are interacting now, he should have seen us earlier this week." The group process began to adapt within limits set by the principal. This adaptation took the form of establishing a specific task to be worked out by the members of the cadre. The task was cross-role development within the school.

The principal was not present during the fourth week while the assistant principal was present once. The consultant did not appear during the fourth week of cadre meetings. This week was marked by a protracted discussion of cross-role (cross-discipline) co-operation. Ideas were forthcoming, however, the manner in which the ideas were presented -- each individual suggesting what he could do with every other individual -- gradually lead to redundancy and minimized the degree of interaction among cadre members. This motion of course affected sentiments and activity as members began to question the usefulness of the procedure. The completion of the cross-role pairing exercise was perfunctory. The tendency, however, was toward a re-establishment of the group norms and renewed activity in working out projects for the cadre's undertaking.

At the beginning of the fifth week the principal was present along with the program director, the cadre liaison, and most members of the group. The group had gained considerable cohesiveness and proceeded to interact with the principal and the Ford Training and Placement Program director. This was the point at which two styles of leadership and two different norms reached a confrontation. The major difference on this occasion was that the norms developing out of the group's behavior were upheld by the cadre liaison. Authoritarian and impersonal statements were met by democratic procedures in an attempt

to arrive at a consensus on the issue of community representation. There was quite a bit of support within the group even though interaction predominated among experienced teachers, the cadre liaison, and the program director. The principal was again present on Tuesday of the fifth week. Aggressive and apathetic norms; e.g., incisive innuendos directed to the principal, withdrawal responses of writing and reading during the discussion, which reflected authoritarian leadership were observed. Interaction again took place exclusively between experienced teachers and the principal. Several members (two experienced teachers and one intern) expressed their sentiments by leaving the room. During the course of these discussions of community representation, the principal reinforced an already popular notion with the following statement, "It is possible that nothing discussed in the cadre may be implemented."

The cadre as a work group had been weakened by the principal's stance. The meeting following the principal's statement was characterized by much expressive activity; i.e., laughing, joking, sub-grouping, etc. and much less instrumental activity (work-oriented behavior.) At the end of the fifth week the cadre liaison asked the group its impression of the summer program. The following opinions from group members should offer some insight into the sentiment and norms of the Simeon cadre at this point.*

A. "Frustration, uncertainty, definitions and redefinitions of group process, rhetoric, a basic distrust in the effectiveness of this program."

B. "The cadre should be more structured with planned questions, problems, and possibilities.

C. "I see the program as one for experienced teachers to come together with new teachers...The group does not want to accept the responsibility for its own structuring and planning."

*Heman states that "opinion" represents the mutual dependence of sentiments and norms.

D. "We have been stifled by a lack of administrative presence."

E. "We were not supposed to come up with anything tangible, we were just supposed to learn to work as a group."

The principal was present on Tuesday of the last week. One of the experienced female teachers was forward in supporting the assertion that the cadre has missed administrative inputs. She referred to the administrators as "they." One cadre member referred to some personnel problems that might be rectified. The principal once again issued a threatening innuendo to the effect that the cadre could "phase itself out of existence" with these concerns.

The following day, Miss Stephanie Skurdy discussed the Forrestville cadre and its development which was facilitated by the principal who participated consistently in the work of the cadre. This session prompted much discussion of the role that the principal had played in the development of the Simeon cadre.

The group has recognized certain pejorative external factors affecting the internal growth of the cadre; e.g., the ambiguous role of principal, absenteeism, the unclear relationship of Ford Training and Placement Program goals and objectives to the Simeon situation. These fetters can only disappear through persistent group effort. At this point the balance between centrifugal (disintegrative) forces and centripetal (integrative) forces is tilted toward the latter. The cadre went through a protracted period of disintegration, which is apparent from the foregoing discussion, however, the group was able to recognize and work through many of the problems attending this period.

1. The summer session ended on a re-evaluation note.

2. Internal sentiments were strong.

3. Amicable relations existed among cadre members.

4. The cadre as a work group was ready to launch certain activities; e.g., hooked on books, cross-role development and study hall improvement.

5. The interns had expressed a feeling of support from other cadre members.

6. The isolation of new teachers had undoubtedly been drastically reduced through this sustained period of interaction and activity. Whether the Simeon cadre can mass its centripetal forces for the kind of cohesion it will need in the larger social system, remains to be seen.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FORD TRAINING AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The relationship between the Ford Training and Placement Program goals and objectives and the cadre were unclear to Simeon members. The question of the purpose and role of the cadre at Simeon Vocational High School was raised repeatedly by various members of the cadre. It was not understood that the Ford Training and Placement Program could not prescribe a program for Simeon. Neither was it expected that the principal would circumscribe the potential scope of cadre activities to meet his perceived needs in the school. The confusion that these variables occasioned may have been circumvented by a clear presentation of the Ford Training and Placement Program goals and objectives and the problems; e.g., cadre roles, which have historically characterized the program. Through the fourth week of cadre planning, the question of the purpose of the cadre was being raised. The principal's understanding of the cadre's function was different from that of many of the members. If the goals and objectives of the Ford Training and Placement Program are to provide resources, people, money, curriculum, etc. to set the conditions for collegial relations between experienced teachers from a particular inner-city school situation and interns from the University of Chicago, and to have this group create an operational model apposite to its peculiar setting; let these objectives be articulated clearly in the future. Many ambiguities may be eradicated through this procedure; concurrently, the group may move forward realistically to deal with its peculiar setting.

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# APPENDIX

The Simeon Cadre first say their objectives as improving the quality of education at Simeon Vocational High School. From this general objective they moved to identify problems at Simeon. These problems were rubricated under the following categories: Teacher, Student, Administration, School, and Community. Some of the specific areas of problem-identification were:

1. Reading
2. Attendance
3. Orientation
4. Teacher, Community, Student Involvement
5. Subject Relevance
6. Attitudes
7. School spirit
8. Atmosphere
9. Use of library
10. Teacher Attendance and Tardiness
11. Physical Plant
12. Social Behavior
13. Classroom Discipline

After this period of identification, the cadre tried to discover ways of approaching these problems. The approaches included:

1. More extensive teacher and student orientation
2. "Hooked on Books" concept in reading
3. Reading Laboratory
4. Cross-role development in curriculum planning
5. Bookstore
6. Study hall improvement
7. Discipline cooperation.